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SIPDIS

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FOR NEA/ARP AND IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL UN AE
SUBJECT: CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP -- UAE NATIONALS IN UNOPS

¶11. An MoU signed in Dubai August 22 between the Executive Director of UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) and the UAE Minister of Labor (and Chairman of the National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority) provides for 10 positions to be created for UAE nationals to serve in UNOPS' Junior Professional Officer (JPO) program, four at the UNOPS Middle East Office in Dubai, three at UNOPS corporate headquarters in Copenhagen, and three at other regional UNOPS offices worldwide.

¶12. The UAEG-sponsored initiative is aimed to give UAE nationals experience in working with the UN for an initial period of two years, with potential to join the UN family more permanently after successful completion of that term. According to the UNOPS Regional Director, the plan is underwritten by the UAE (likely a cooperative effort between businesses and the UAEG) which will cover salaries for the 10 nationals (presumably at the same wage scale as other UN employees in similar status), to help UAE citizens gain experience in an international organization in which they are traditionally (and severely) under-represented. UNOPS also notes that the Dubai ruler's pressure on private companies to fulfill "corporate social responsibilities" may encourage firms to sign on to the JPO arrangement.

¶13. Comment: UAE goals of this initiative likely include broadening the horizons of UAE nationals, learning more about how the UN works (and how programs involving UAE contributions are implemented), and highlighting the nation's contribution to the international community. UNOPS goals include deepening engagement with the host of its Middle East operational hub. Time will tell whether JPO participation may lead to a career with the UN for UAE nationals, the more qualified of whom have diverse options for pursuing a lucrative future. We cannot rule out the possibility that the JPO benefit package might be augmented in creative ways by the UAE to attract qualified applicants. End comment.

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